

Story 1931 (1995 Tape 1)

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Noah's Three Daughters

Those people who did not believe in the teachings of the prophet Noah were punished by Allah with a great Flood. When the waters started to rise, the believers gathered around Noah as he was building the Ark. When that great ship was completed, Noah took aboard it a pair of every kind of animal, a pair of every kind of plant, and many other living things. He then also took into the Ark all of the people who had believed his words.

Noah had a daughter, and while the Ark was being prepared to sail, the hand of that daughter was requested by a young man. The suitor said, "Hey, prophet Noah, may I marry your daughter?" Noah was pleased by the request, and after talking with the young man for awhile, he agreed to give his daughter to this suitor after they had all been saved from the Flood and had reached dry land again.

A short while later a second suitor was attracted to Noah's daughter, and so he went to the prophet and asked for her hand. "O prophet Noah," he said, "may I have permission to marry your daughter?"

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Noah had been so busy preparing the Ark that he had forgotten all about having promised the girl to another suitor. He therefore said to this second suitor, "Yes, you may marry my daughter, but not until the great catastrophe has ended and we are all back on dry land again." Shortly before the Ark began to float, Noah was again very forgetful, and he promised his daughter to a third suitor.

After the great catastrophe had ended and the Ark had settled down upon the earth again, each of the three suitors went to Noah separately and said, "You promised to give me your daughter in marriage after the Flood had ended and we were all back on land again. Is it not now time to set a date for the wedding?"

Noah gave the same date for the marriage of all three suitors. He was greatly confused and dismayed. He realized now what a terrible situation his forgetfulness had caused. He prayed, "O great Allah, help me in my difficulty."

Allah ordered him to have his daughter spend the night in the same barn where he kept his dog and his donkey. This confused Noah even more, but he obeyed Allah's command. On the following morning he went to the barn and was amazed at what he saw. The dog and the donkey had disappeared, but in their place there were two girls who looked so much like his daughter that within a day or two, he could not distinguish among them. He could not tell which was his real

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daughter. On the date set for the weddings the three suitors married these three girls, and everyone was pleased with this arrangement. Each daughter went to the home of her husband and there began to live happily.

After some time had passed—perhaps two years—the prophet Noah and his wife decided to visit their daughters. They went first to the home of the nearest couple and knocked on the door. When their daughter opened the door and looked out, she began to scream. “Why did you come so soon? Why didn’t you inform me that you were coming? I did not invite you here! You are disturbing us!”

Upon hearing this, prophet Noah said to his wife, “Ah, this must be the daughter who was formerly a dog.”

The parents then traveled to the home of their next-nearest daughter and knocked on her door. There was no response. They knocked several more times, but still no one appeared to welcome them. Finding the door unlocked, they entered the house. There they found their daughter lying in bed. Although she was awake, she said nothing, and she ignored them completely. Prophet Noah then said to his wife, “Such balky behavior indicates that this must have been the daughter who had earlier been a donkey.”

They then continued their journey to visit the daughter who now lived at the greatest distance from their home. The door was

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opened even before prophet Noah was able to knock on it. The daughter living there was delighted to see her father and mother. She ran out of the house and hugged both of them and said, “Oh, I have missed you so much! Why didn’t you come sooner? You married me to a stranger, and then you seemed to forget all about me!” Her words expressed very clearly her love for her parents.

Prophet Noah then said, “This must be our real daughter.” He and his wife then hugged the girl in return and kissed her eyes.¹

¹In Turkish folktales, kissing of the hands (and sometimes feet) is meant to show respect to an older person. Kissing of the eyes (actually eyelids) signals affection for or encouragement to a younger person.